

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislature Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on December 12, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairwoman
Leg. Ricardo Montano, Vice Chair
Leg. Kara Hahn
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley
Leg. Steven H. Stern
Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay, ex-officio member

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk
Robert Doering, Budget Review Office
Greg Dawson, Commissioner/Parks Department
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory
Thomas Vaughn, County Executive Assistant III
Marie Berkowski, Aide to County Executive
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Leg. Hahn
Rick Brand, Newsday
Jack Demasi, appointee/SC Vanderbilt Museum
Kevin Peterman, appointee/SC Vanderbilt Museum
Matt Haggerty
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:04 PM

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Will all Legislators please come to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

We're going to start with the salute to the flag. And how about we have our Commissioner Greg Dawson lead the salute.

SALUTATION

Good afternoon and welcome to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

PUBLIC PORTION

We do have a card. Matt Haggerty. Come on up, Matt. Wow, it's nice to see you.

MR. HAGGERTY:

You as well.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I understand you're a dog walker in the park.

MR. HAGGERTY:

Yes, indeed. I knew your brother -- your brother well for a longtime.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

You knew Dennison Bailey, huh?

MR. HAGGERTY:

Yeah. Well, actually it pre-dated that. We initially met when he and your dad used to walk by my house with the old chocolate lab they had.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Oh.

MR. HAGGERTY:

And so it's been quite a while. Thank you for seeing me today.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Oh, pleasure.

MR. HAGGERTY:

I'd like to speak today about the pond at Blydenburgh Park.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. Just put your name on the record and then --

MR. HAGGERTY:

My name is Matt Haggerty. I live at 203 Woodland Avenue in St. James, New York.

And today I'd like to speak about the pond at Blydenburgh Park. I've grown up in Smithtown since the early '60s. And the park is the place I've grown up at. The pond had always been a gem for Suffolk County in particular. And in the last few years it's become choked -- choked to the point where it's actually dying. There's a DEC report from 2011 that states the Park is threatened.

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CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Pull that mic closer to you.

MR. HAGGERTY:

Yeah, sure. I'm sorry. Yeah, that's better. (Continuing) Stating that the park is threatened. And that aquatic life and plant life are being threatened there by this invasive plant species. There's also a DEC report from 2005 stating there's ways to mitigate this, which is draining the pond down.

I spoke to Chard Guthrie from the DEC. He's agreeable with this. I had a chance to speak with Commissioner Dawson. Superintendent Dawson. Excuse me. And he is going to be looking into this for me and try to deal with it. It's really sad to see this gem of a pond slowly die and it is. I have some information here if anybody would like to take a look at it. I have folders with some definite things on it.

I would actively just encourage the Committee's support for the Commissioner to get this done. There is almost zero cost to the County to do this. It's just a matter of slowly lowering the water level in there and then raising it back up after it sits during the course of the wintertime. Again, this is a DEC recommended and approved way to handle this. I've included the DEC report in there on it.

As far as funds, if there's any expenses to the County, as a small businessman, I'm willing to make contributions to this and I've solicited other people in the area to also do the same thing. So, really, this is kind of a home run for the County. We can bring this gem back to its state that it was in a long time ago. And there's really almost no cost at all. I'd be happy to contribute my time and, again, funds to do this. And I thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Matt, thank you. Thank you for bringing it to our attention and for giving us this photo also.

MR. HAGGERTY:

It's of a swan that was choked by the weeds.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Oh, my God.

MR. HAGGERTY:

I apologize for the nature of it, but it's -- it's so sad. And that was just this past Friday.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Well, I know you spoke to Commissioner Dawson. And, Commissioner, if you want to make a comment on it -- we do love Blydenburg. And we know there's issues and we know there's problems. And then after the Hurricane we even had more problems. And you know that there's so many things that we're trying to make better since the hurricane. But, Commissioner, how do you feel about dredging the pond? Would you dredge it or --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, as Mr. Haggerty indicated, we met briefly prior to the meeting. And he gave me a copy of his report. We discussed it. I was going to have a meeting with my Senior Environmental Analyst, Nick Gibbons, and see the liability of doing something like this and I'll get back to him.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Yeah, I'm sure we'd all appreciate it. And would you also, Commissioner, just keep letting myself know or the Committee know where we stand on this?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. And, Mr. Haggerty, obviously it's not going to be within the next week or so. But when we do hear from the Commissioner, we do get some answers, and I can't promise miracles, I'll give you a buzz?

MR. HAGGERTY:

That would be great. Thanks very much.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay.

MR. HAGGERTY:

And I'd just like to thank the Commissioner again and say that the Parks Department of the Town of Smithtown -- excuse me -- Suffolk County is incredible, the work they've done in the park already, restoring the mill, which is about to fall down, is amazing. And I strongly support their work that they're going to be doing hopefully on the old boathouse there as well.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Thank you.

MR. HAGGERTY:

Thank you very much for time.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Thank you.

MR. HAGGERTY:

I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

It's nice to hear compliments as well.

MR. HAGGERTY:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Commissioner, did you want to address the Committee with anything?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I just wanted to give you a quick update. I know the horse folk were up here at the last meeting. I just wanted to report that we've had crews up on the north side of the park the last couple of days. I received a phone call from one of the constituents today. They said they were very happy with the progress that is being made up there. So, I think we're -- I think we're in pretty good shape.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Oh, that's great, Commissioner. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And just one other quick note. We had a fire on Sunday night into Monday morning. We lost one of our structures Sweet Hollow Hall up in -- up in West Hills Park up in Huntington. So, it was a -- it was a big loss but --

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Not good to hear.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, it's not.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Do you want to address any of the resolutions or should we just go ahead?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

You can just proceed. I think I'll jump in if you have any questions.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. So we're going to go right to the agenda, **Tabled Resolution 1700, Repealing twilight fee at County beaches. (Browning)** I'll make a motion to table, second by Legislator Montano. Is that okay with you?

LEG. MONTANO:

Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

All in favor? Opposed? **1700 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

1949, To modify golf fees for Veterans. (Schneiderman) Motion to table by Legislator Stern.

LEG. MONTANO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? **1949 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Introductory Resolutions: 2171, Authorizing a License Agreement with the Long Island Live Steamers, Inc. At Southaven County Park, Yaphank. (Co. Exec.) What's that license agreement for? What's that for, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It's a group. It's a -- I don't want to call it a model railway. It's miniature railways that -- they have a permit with us to operate up in Southaven Park. They're open to the public. They've been operating up there since -- somewhere in 1960s.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

You know what, I do recall that.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

That's great.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And it's a ten-year agreement with --

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I thought they were clams but (laughter) --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Two five's. (Laughter) Wishful thinking.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

But I guess we know what they are now. Okay, I'll make a motion, second by Legislator Hahn. Is that okay?

LEG. HAHN:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

All in favor? Opposed? **2171 is approved. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0. PO LINDSAY INCLUDED IN VOTE)**

2198, Appropriating funds in connection with renovations at Historic Blydenburgh Park (CP 7507). (Kennedy) That has been **withdrawn**. We'll go to the next.

2220, Appointing Jack Demasi as a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission (Trustee No. 14). (Spencer) Mr. Demasi, did you want to come up here for a minute and just introduce yourself?

Mr. Demasi, just state your name and just tell us maybe why you feel that you would like to be a member as a Trustee of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum.

MR. DEMASI:

Well, for one -- I guess the only way I can describe, you know, why I want to do this is because my entire life has been spent in some kind of public service for little or no remuneration. And why should I stop now? Plus, it's a wonderful, viable cultural institution. I took my kids there when they were little. I think it needs to be more -- greatly integrated into the community so I'd like to be there to help.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

And you sound like you have the time to do it. You can run there, you said.

MR. DEMASI:

Let's just say I'll make the time to do it.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Demasi?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yes, I do.

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CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Yes, Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, Mr. Demasi, first of all, I want to thank you for agreeing to serve on the Board of the Vanderbilt. The Vanderbilt, we feel, is really one of our pearls within the County's holdings. It's a beautiful piece of property, the museum. The Board plays a major role in running the place. We greatly appreciate you agreeing to volunteer your time. And in the paperwork, we didn't -- I don't see it here, your resume. Could you tell us a little bit about your background and -- just briefly?

MR. DEMASI:

Briefly. Mostly I've been a teacher since 1968. I've taught literally every level of education from elementary through graduate school. And currently I'm teaching at Nassau Community College, Communications Department. I have done lots and lots of stuff; been a magazine editor, had -- was a partner in an advertising company. But, you know -- consulting for political candidates and so on and so on. You know, it's very wide and very background. I run coffee houses and other kinds of -- I've been involved in arts activities for a very longtime. I've had some experience in writing grants even, but that goes back before computers, so.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Thank you, Mr. Demasi. It's nice to have somebody giving their time back to the community. We do appreciate it. Are there any other questions? Okay.

MR. DEMASI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Was there a motion?

MS. ORTIZ:

No.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Stern, second by Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? **2220 is approved. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0. PO LINDSAY INCLUDED IN VOTE)** And, Mr. Demasi, you do not have to come to the Legislative meeting on Tuesday. If you wish, that's fine, but you do not.

2221, Reappointing Stephen F. Melore as a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission (Trustee No. 12). (Pres. Off.) Motion by Legislator Lindsay, second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? **2221 is approved. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0. PO LINDSAY INCLUDED IN VOTE)**

2222, Reappointing Kevin Peterman as a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission (Trustee No. 3). (Pres. Off.) Motion by Legislator Hahn, second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? Thank you, Kevin. Thank you for always helping out.

LEG. HAHN:

Are you here because you want to say something, Kevin?

MR. PETERMAN:

No.

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CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

All in favor? Opposed? **2222 is approved. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0. PO LINDSAY INCLUDED IN VOTE)**

2223, Amending the 2012 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with renovations at Historic Blydenburgh Park (CP 7507). (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion, second by Legislator Stern.

LEG. MONTANO:

What are we amending? What are we spending it on?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We're asking for half a million dollars. We're moving 70,000 of that half a million into design. From construction into design.

LEG. MONTANO:

So it's within the same -- it's in the same appropriation.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It's within the same budget. It's the same -- it's half a million dollars appropriation for the park.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. I got you. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

There is a motion and a second. All in favor? Opposed? **2223 is approved. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0. PO LINDSAY INCLUDED IN VOTE)** There is nothing else for the Committee. And this would be the last Committee of the year. Thank you all.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:17 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**